

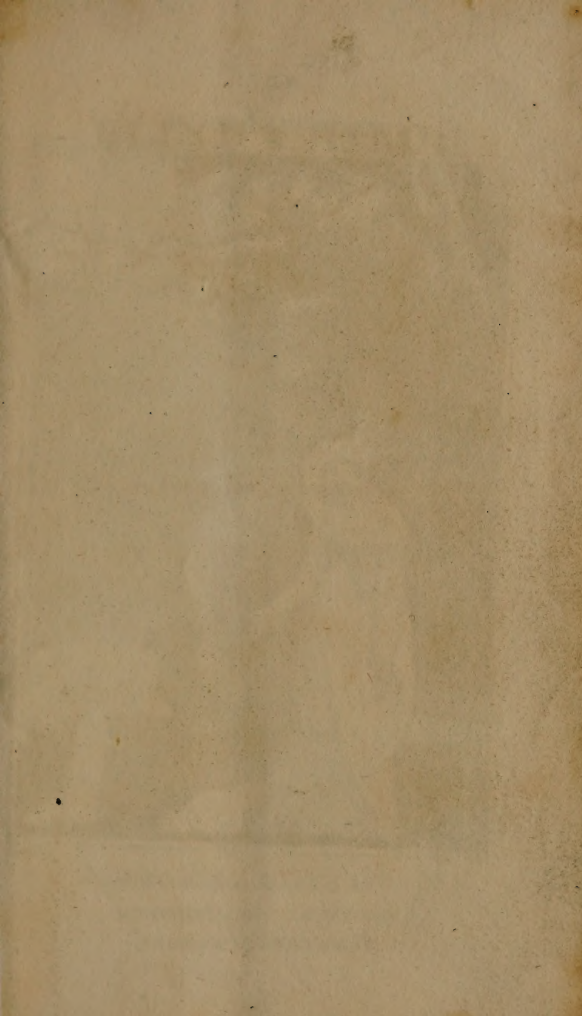




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THE
BLIND CHILD:

OR,

ANECDOTES

OF

THE WYNDHAM FAMILY,

WRITTEN FOR THE USE OF

YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY A LADY.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON :

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AND HARVEY AND DARTON.

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PREFACE.

IT has always been my opinion, that a person of genius, who dedicates superior talents to the instruction of young people, deserves the highest applause and the most enthusiastic admiration. To write with a constant attention to the limited understanding or information of children; to restrain a lively imagination, and employ a mind capable of the most brilliant pursuits on subjects of a puerile kind, seems to be a sort of heroic sacrifice of gratification to virtue which I cannot doubt is acceptable to the Supreme Being.

We have, in the present age, many striking examples of this kind. The names of Barbauld and Genlis will be sufficient to prove this, although with them many others might undoubtedly claim that immortal honour, which the union of genius with virtue ought always to bestow.

To rank with such characters as these, how-

ever it may be my ambition, will, I fear, never be my lot! But a noble emulation, whether or not it be successful, can never be despicable; and whatever are my talents, the desire of making them subservient to the cause of virtue, will, at least, be approved by the candid and the good; to *them* I dedicate the following simple pages: happy, most happy, if they serve to awaken in the rising generation, that lively wish for goodness they were intended to inspire.

My principal aim, it will be seen, is to repress that excessive softness of heart, which too frequently involves its possessor in a train of evils, and which is by no means true *sensibility*, that exquisite gift of Heaven, which no one can esteem more highly than myself, though its abuse every day, serves more and more to convince me, it can never be sufficiently discouraged and condemned. With this short explanation of the motives which have induced me to give this work to the public, I resign it with implicit obedience to the decrees of those who are much more able than myself to judge of its merits.

THE
BLIND CHILD.

PART FIRST.

MR. WYNDHAM, of whose family I am about to relate some anecdotes, was an eminent merchant ; he married an amiable woman, by whom he had four children. Their residence during the winter was in one of the best streets in the city of London ; and in the summer months at his fine estate in the country, on which he had built an elegant house, and

where the riches his industry, and that of his father, had gained, were partly employed in decorating his grounds, and partly distributed with a liberal hand among the neighbouring poor. But it is not of Mr. Wyndham only I mean to speak, though his benevolence, his probity, and various virtues, might well employ a more able historian than myself: it is true, he will sometimes appear to great advantage in the following pages; but since I address myself to a youthful class of readers, it is probable they will be more interested in what respects his children. It is their dispositions, their conduct, their manners, I mean to describe, and Mr. Wyndham will appear in a

more amiable light as their father than any other: as a good mother too, Mrs. Wyndham will, I doubt not, excite many grateful comparisons in my young friends, who will read in her character, those virtues which have been exerted by their own mothers, and not one sentiment of regret will, I hope, be awakened by a review of her actions, except in that feeling youthful bosom which mourns the loss of an indulgent parent.

Mr. Wyndham's eldest child was a daughter, named Emily: she was at the time when this history commences, just turned of fourteen, and at that age gave promise of every amiable and virtuous quality: I say

gave *promise*, because at that time of life, the character cannot be decided. Neither had she been injudiciously brought forward according to the fashion of the times, which, hastening the summer of life, shortens the spring, and consequently denies a proper time for the unfolding of the silken bud, and forces an immature fruit, neither fair to the sight nor pleasing to the taste. This reflection, excited by my subject, may, I hope, be excused; for should my young readers pass it over as unimportant *now*, it may hereafter recur to their memory, as neither untrue, nor uninteresting.

Emily, with the form of the most delicate order, had been accustomed

so early to habits of industry and exercise, that her frame had acquired a strength which nature had denied, and her countenance a bloom which enlivened it with the most graceful vivacity. She was not a beauty, but she was perfectly agreeable ; her healthy appearance, her intelligent and modest smile, the ingenuous candour which shone in her eyes, gave her charms infinitely preferable to a cold regularity of features, because they were graces which rose from the heart, and could not have existed without a corresponding sweetness of disposition. In the mild countenance and elegant manners of Emily you might read the excellence of her temper and the in-

telligence of her soul. In her eyes, as in a mirror, you saw reflected every motion of her heart; she was without disguise, and her natural graces were infinitely preferable to any which art and affectation could have taught her; but her character will reveal itself, and my young readers, though charmed with Emily, may be impatient to hear more of her brother and sisters. Mr. Wyndham's second child was a son, near twelve years of age, he was named Arthur, and he deserved equally with Emily, the affections of his parents; he was naturally of a bold, impetuous disposition, which they had taken the utmost pains to keep within due bounds, and had so far

succeeded, that, except in a very few instances, his behaviour was perfectly becoming; sometimes, indeed, his natural impatience subjected him to inconvenience, but that Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham did not much regret, because it served to convince him how right they were, when they warned him against yielding to the eagerness of his temper; he had an excellent sense, great tenderness of heart, and a most affectionate disposition, which shewed itself to peculiar advantage in his behaviour to his sisters. To the second of them he was even more mindful than to the others; alas! she most needed his attention. She was nine years old, her name was Helen, and when she

was about a year old, she had the misfortune of losing her sight by a violent cold, so that she was now entirely blind, her fine dark eyes turned mournfully round without receiving a single ray of light. She had become blind so young that she had no idea of the objects before her; she knew not what was meant by the sun, the moon, or any thing that was talked of as beautiful; and what still more affected her tender heart, she knew not the countenances of her father and mother!—What grief to them was this sad affliction! with what anguish did they perceive the impossibility of giving her equal advantage of education with their other children! with what ardour

did they pray for the restoration of her sight.

The youngest was also a girl, she was about seven years old, and was named Maria : she was very pretty, very gentle and sweet in her temper, and entirely the favourite of all the family.—Thus would Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham have been completely happy in their children, but for the misfortune of poor Helen, for which, however, they were partly consoled, by the tenderness and compassion it excited in her brother and sisters. At the time I have chosen for the commencement of these anecdotes, Mr. Wyndham's family had just passed the winter in London, and were preparing for their remove to

Belle-Ville, their seat in the country. The children were all extremely rejoiced and delighted with the thoughts of so pleasing an exchange; they were all busily employed in packing up their clothes, except Helen, who sat on a window seat in the nursery, attending to their conversation.

ARTHUR.

Emily, sha'n't you be very glad to see your birds again?

EMILY.

Yes, indeed, brother; I hope the hard winter has destroyed none of them; I charged Jenny to throw the crumbs into the filbert-tree walk, and I hope we shall find it well stocked with as many little pensioners as

usual. But I have a much greater pleasure in expectation.

ARTHUR.

What is that, Emily?

EMILY.

Can you not guess, Arthur?

ARTHUR.

Oh, I'll be hanged if you don't mean seeing little Charlotte Neville?

EMILY.

But there can be no occasion for your saying, you'd *be hang'd*, brother, even if you were wrong in your guess.

HELEN (*laughing.*)

I'm glad you told him of that ugly saying, sister; I don't like to hear him use it.

ARTHUR.

If I like it, that's enough ; you need not trouble yourself to correct my language.

HELEN.

But I say, Arthur, that Papa does not chuse you should use those words.

ARTHUR.

Well, then, Papa can tell me of it without your assistance.

HELEN.

But not——

EMILY.

Hush, my dear Helen.—Arthur, don't be angry. Come, what were we talking of ?

MARIA.

Oh, of Charlotte Neville; and I shall be very glad to see her too. I shall then shew her my new doll, and this pretty coach Mr. Jones gave me, and this new book—look what nice pictures there are in it—“ *This is the house that Jack built.*” Who was Jack, sister?

HELEN.

How her little tongue runs!

ARTHUR.

But, Emily, to ask you rather a more important question than Maria's, do you know how Mrs. Neville is?

EMILY.

Ah! Mamma's last letter says, she is very ill indeed.

ARTHUR.

And is not Mamma very sorry?

EMILY.

Certainly, for you know they have always loved each other. To lose Mrs. Neville would be the same thing to Mamma, as it would be to Helen if I were to die! they have always loved like sisters.

HELEN.

To die! I don't understand that. I never could have thought of it.

EMILY (*to Arthur with tears in her eyes.*)

Poor thing, how she affects me? She means, she can have no idea of it. Alas! how many ideas must she want in consequence of her blindness?

HELEN.

But, Emily, you don't answer me.
Tell me, then, what it is to die!

EMILY.

You ask too hard a question for me to answer, my dear Helen; I can only tell you, that when a person dies, they have no longer any sense; they seem as if they were asleep, except that they do not breathe, and they wake no more.

HELEN.

I do not quite understand; but I know enough to be sure that it cannot be the same thing to Mamma, if Mrs. Neville was to die, as it would be to me if you died; for if you were always asleep, you could not lead me about, you could not tell

me such amusing stories; now Mamma can walk by herself, and read stories, and what you call work; I can do none of all this. Oh, it is quite another thing!

ARTHUR.

Don't talk so, my dear Helen; you make us all sad.

MARIA.

And Emily is crying.

HELEN.

Where, where is she? lead me to her, Maria.

EMILY.

I will come to you, my dear sister:—

Emily then ran to her, embraced her, and here the conversation ceased for that time; the next morning

they all set off for Belle-Ville, which they reached in the evening, and were too much tired to stir from the house that night: the next morning they rose very early; the three girls were soon dressed, and then they rapped at Arthur's door, which he opened, and they all went down together. Arthur, impatient and eager, in a few minutes found himself several yards before his sisters; he was closely followed by little Maria, who skipped from place to place like a young bird, and made many thousand exclamations about flowers and trees. Emily, with Helen leaning on her arm, continued to walk more slowly on the terrace, which commanded a beautiful view,

and where they held the following conversation :

HELEN.

I feel the air very warm and pleasant, and how sweetly the birds sing.

EMILY.

'Tis a glorious morning; the spring returns in all its beauty, and the birds enjoy the young leaves.

HELEN.

So! Arthur and Maria are run away; I no longer hear their voices; and you, my dear Emily, how good you are to remain with me; if you will lead me to a bench, I will sit down, and you may run also.

EMILY.

No, my dear, I feel no inclination to do so.

HELEN: *emphatically*

That is so good! You say so, because you would not have me feel sorry for keeping you here. Yes, yes, I understand that, and I ought never to feel unhappy, since I have such kind relations. But, Emily, you said just now, it is a glorious morning; why cannot I have any notion of a *glorious morning*? You talk of the sun; you say, *how bright it shines*; why does he shine, as you call it, in vain only for me? I cannot help sighing when I think of it!

EMILY (*embracing her.*)

It makes me sigh too, my dear girl; it makes me as sad as it does you. But do not say the sun shines in vain for you: 'tis true, you can-

not see him ; but it is by his assistance, that the air is warmed and purified ; that the birds are enlivened, and caused to sing ; that these flowers, which you smell, are produced ; thus, then, he shines not in vain even for you.

HELEN.

That is true ; I ought not to be unhappy ; but there are so many things I do not understand, so many words which have no meaning to me. The other day, when you left the room, Mr. Thompson said to Mamma, “ Miss Wyndham grows very handsome ; she is charming.” “ No, Sir,” Mamma said, “ she is not very handsome, but she is a very good girl.” What did he mean by

handsome, and why did Mamma say you were not so?

EMILY.

Mamma was in the right; he said so because he thought she would be pleased with it.

HELEN.

But how is that? Would Mamma be pleased with you for being handsome? Why, then, are you not?

EMILY.

No, Mamma is too just; she would not love me the better for being handsome; only foolish people are pleased with that.

HELEN.

Ah, then, Mr. Thompson, I guess, is not very wise to take Mamma for

a foolish person ! But how is it you cannot be handsome ?

EMILY.

My dear, I can no more make myself handsome, than you can make yourself see. To be handsome, we must have regular features, a good complexion, and a fine shape. It is only God who can give these. They are given to many persons, but these are not always the most happy. They frequently become vain or proud with their beauty ; they attend to nothing but its improvement ; they learn nothing but how to dress themselves ; they are idle, frivolous, and useless ; while children they are inattentive to their parents, when parents, they are careless of

their children. These are my mother's ideas—almost her words; but this picture is not universal; some people render beauty more pleasing by good sense, by accomplishments, and by virtue.

HELEN.

I understand you, in part, but I can have no notion of beauty.

EMILY.

Smell this flower; you can receive pleasure from its scent.

HELEN.

Yes, I can; it is delightful.

EMILY.

That bird—do you not like to hear him sing.

HELEN.

Yes, surely.

EMILY.

Well, then, the eye has sensations something like these; when it sees any thing beautiful, it receives the same pleasure which you have in a pleasant scent or an agreeable sound.

HELEN.

You have given me a very good notion of it, at least I think so; if ever it should please God to give me my sight, I will tell you whether you had ever before given me any idea of it's advantages.

She pronounced these words in so affecting a tone, that Emily could not help shedding tears, and Helen, softened by their conversation, wept also. At that instant they were joined by Arthur and Maria; they

had run themselves out of breath, and were both laughing, but their mirth was changed in an instant into gravity, when they saw the melancholy of their sisters.

MARIA.

What, you have been crying, because we ran away from you; is not that it? Well then, be comforted, you shall run too; I will lead Helen.

ARTHUR.

Hold your peace, simpleton; would they cry because we left them? No, no, we only disturb them.

EMILY.

How! why do you think so?

D

ARTHUR.

Because we are such chatter-pies, and you are so grave and so good. Come, what is all this about? Have you been weeping over the lamentable tale of Blue Beard, or the melancholy history of Cinderella?

EMILY.

What nonsense is that you are talking.

ARTHUR.

But you laugh; well, that is all I wanted, so my nonsense has succeeded; and Helen laughs too—that is right. Do you know it is almost breakfast-time? I fancy we shall be expected. Come, Helen, lean on me; Emily, take the other

arm: run before, little kitten, and tell them we are coming in grand procession.

HELEN.

Arthur makes me laugh, he is so droll.

They then went into the house, and after breakfast was over, the children gave an account of their morning ramble. Helen was gone out of the room, and Emily remained silent; Mrs. Wyndham observing this, asked her how she found her birds and bees.

EMILY.

I did not see them, Ma'am.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

How happened that, my dear?

EMILY.

I was walking on the terrace with Helen, Ma'am, and she did not seem disposed to run to the Filbert-tree walk, it was so far, and we rose later than usual.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

What then, you were the only one with Helen; Arthur and Maria had run away—was it not so?

EMILY.

Yes, Madam, but—

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Nay, my dear, I shall not speak of this as a serious matter; I dare say their volatile spirits only were the cause of their inattention; they should, however, have considered that you, who are particularly fond

of the birds and bees, no doubt wished to see them as much as they could ; they ought, therefore, to have offered their assistance to Helen. Had you been as inconsiderate, the poor child would have been alone.

ARTHUR.

But indeed, Ma'am, I thought Emily and Helen would have followed us.

EMILY.

Yes, I am sure you did, Arthur, and so we should, had we not insensibly engaged in an interesting conversation, which pleased me better than seeing my birds ; therefore, pray, Ma'am, do not be displeased with my brother and sisters.

ARTHUR (*with warmth.*)

You are too good to us, Emily; as to Maria, she is excusable, as being a child, but I ought to have known better. I said, indeed, I thought you would have followed us, but the real truth is, I believe that I did not think any thing about it.

MR. WYNDHAM.

That is right, Arthur; I like this candid avowal.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

'Tis a thousand times better than any excuse; let no more be said on the subject, except that I give you a general caution to imitate the attention of Emily to Helen. Restrain, my dears, those lively spirits which

I delight to see, when they do not interfere with *her* enjoyments. *Poor thing, she is blind*, and is thereby circumscribed in her pleasures; they all depend on our attention, and let me entreat you in this, as in all other circumstances, to do as you would be done by.

At the words, “*Poor thing, she is blind*,” and the pathetic manner in which Mrs. Wyndham pronounced them, the tears started into the eyes of Emily and Arthur; they each kissed a hand of their mother, and she understood the promise their heart made her, never to neglect the helpless object of their cares. Helen just then returned, and they entered immediately on the employ-

ment of the morning. Emily and Maria worked, while Arthur read aloud; and Helen, who by great attention had been taught to knit, employed herself with that, and listened to her brother; he then withdrew to take his Latin and other lessons with his father. Emily then took a book, and afterwards Maria, then Miss Wyndham practised for an hour on the harpsichord, to which Helen listened with great delight; she was excessively fond of music, had an agreeable voice, and could sing several songs. While they employed themselves thus, Maria wrote with her Mamma. The children were then dressed, and Mrs. Wyndham ordered the carriage, and

with her three daughters, set out for an airing; she bade the coachman drive to Mrs. Neville's, whom she was impatient to see, as the children were to embrace their little play fellow, for whom they had brought several toys from London.

When the coach stopped at Mrs. Neville's door, little Charlotte came running out, and in an instant the young Wyndhams were out of the coach, and eagerly embraced her. "Oh, I am so glad to see you," exclaimed Charlotte; "Mamma said 'she thought you would call to-day.'—" "How is your Mamma to-day, my dear?" said Mrs. Wyndham. "Oh, very poorly indeed," the little girl replied; "she is very

weak, too, and now she cannot walk with me at all!" Mrs. Wyndham sighed deeply, and taking little Charlotte by the hand, was led by her into the parlour, where they found Mrs. Neville. Mrs. Wyndham embraced her with that cordiality which their long friendship demanded. Tears started into the eyes of each; Mrs. Neville's arose from the satisfaction she felt in seeing her friend; Mrs. Wyndham's, from grief for the sad alteration a few months had made in Mrs. Neville's countenance. The children, struck by its mournful and interesting paleness, kept a pensive silence; and Emily's eyes were filled with tears; she leaned down and caressed Charlotte. At length Mrs.

Wyndham, conquering her emotion, broke silence.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

You expected me, my very dear friend.

MRS. NEVILLE.

Yes, I knew your kindness would lead you to me as soon as possible. How happy it makes me to see you! I have a thousand things to say!

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I am also impatient to converse with you; but do not fatigue yourself, our arrival has flurried you. Tell me whether you think the children grown. That, you know, is one of the first questions a mother asks.

MRS. NEVILLE (*smiling.*)

I know it by experience. My dear Emily, come to me; how you are grown and improved!

EMILY.

You are always too good to me, my dear Ma'am; it delights me to see you and my dear Charlotte.

MRS. NEVILLE.

Charlotte is happy, my dear girl, in your affection. But let me not forget my other friends.

She then kissed Maria and Helen, while Mrs. Wyndham took Charlotte on her knee.

MRS. NEVILLE.

With what pleasure do I see her in your arms!—Ah, my friend!

She stopped, interrupted by a sudden emotion, and Charlotte's little countenance was overspread with sadness when she beheld her Mamma in tears, "Why do you cry, Mamma?" said she, "you said you should be happy when Mrs. Wyndham came."———"Hush, little prattler," Mrs. Wyndham said in a low voice. Mrs. Neville then recovering herself, proceeded——

MRS. NEVILLE.

My dear friend, I have so much to say to you, and my mind will be so much easier when it is said, that you must gratify my impatience allowing me to converse with you immediately.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

That shall be as you please ; but
will not the fatigue——

MRS. NEVILLE.

No, no, I feel myself quite equal
to it now : I know not how long I
shall be so ; we ought never to defer
till the next hour what we can do
in this, especially when the hours of
our life promise to be few.

She spoke this with a sweet smile,
but Mrs. Wyndham, overcome with
the feelings of humanity, turned
aside to conceal her tears.

MRS. NEVILLE.

Charlotte, will you take Miss
Helen and Miss Maria into your
play-room ? you have several new
toys.

MARIA.

Oh, and we have brought several new ones for her; have we not, Emily? They are in that basket, Mamma: may I open it?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Take them with you, my dear, and open the basket in the next room.

Little Charlotte seized Maria by the hand, and, skipping about, led her into the play-room: Emily rose to assist Helen.

MRS. NEVILLE.

Miss Wyndham, when you have led your sisters into the next room, will you return hither?

EMILY.

If you desire it, Ma'am, and Mamma has no objection.

MRS. NEVILLE.

I wish it much.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Return then, my dear.

Emily curtsied, and returned in a few minutes.

Mrs. Neville paused a minute, she trembled, changed colour, and seemed so much affected, that Emily's heart beat with apprehension for her. Mrs. Wyndham pressed her friend's hand, which she held in her own, and led her into discourse, by talking of Charlotte's growth and improvement.

MRS. NEVILLE.

She is, indeed, all my happiness in this world, the only tie, your friendship excepted, which holds me

to it. My dear Emily, for how many years has your affection been one of my first delights! With what pleasure do I still recollect a thousand instances of it! Have I not been sometimes ungrateful, petulant, and unkind? If I have, forgive me *now*!

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Ah, Charlotte! my friend, my dear friend!

MRS. NEVILLE.

My heart has ever understood yours, it does so still! but I distress you. My dear Miss Wyndham, I requested you to stay, because I am convinced your discretion exceeds your years; you have a good and a feeling heart, cherish its kind affec-

tions. You are grieved to see me thus wasted by disease—thus on the brink of another world. But, my dear young friend, to me the prospect is not dreadful ! let the lesson I now give you sink deep into your heart, let it chasten and confirm your better thoughts. The prospect of death is no longer terrible to me. The *consolations of religion* are my support.

She stopt, exhausted by speaking, for both Mrs. Wyndham and her daughter were too much affected to reply. She resumed her discourse after an instant's pause.

MRS. NEVILLE.

Forgive me for speaking so much of myself, it is to reconcile you

to an event which soon, / very soon, must take place; my dear Emily, be not so affected, recover yourself.

MRS. WYNDHAM (*embracing her with tears.*)

Ah, Charlotte, why do you speak thus? let me still hope that much may be done for you.

MRS. NEVILLE.

No, do not hope it. And why should you even wish it? Why recal me to a world, which, thank heaven, I am now prepared to quit? Who knows if I might be so some years hence? Be assured, however, nothing has been neglected; but all the medicine in the world can avail me no longer!

Emily through her tears stole a glance at her mother, and saw her change colour so often that she dreaded her fainting, a sudden motion alone spoke her apprehensions. Mrs. Wyndham saw it, and waved her hand to forbid her rising; then, by an immediate effort of fortitude, she said calmly, "Let me not disturb your tranquillity, my dear friend!—May God grant me the same at the hour of my death!"

Emily's young heart, struck by these words, seemed to die within her; she hid her face with her hands, and burst into a flood of tears. Mrs. Wyndham and Mrs. Neville looked at each other, but took no notice of her emotion, which she soon con-

quered by a wish to emulate the virtuous fortitude of her mother. When they were all rather more composed Mrs. Neville said :

“ Allow me a few words more, though it distresses me to agitate you. One regret alone stands between me and a better world ; my little Charlotte ! ”—She stopped, and Mrs. Wyndham regarded her with earnest attention.

MRS. NEVILLE.

She is so young, that my loss will be but for a short time lamented. But, alas ! hereafter, how severely may she feel it ! the loss of a mother to a girl is infinitely greater than she can conceive till she is herself a mother. Ah, who shall shield her

innocence from deceit and her youth from anguish.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Ah, Charlotte! have you not a friend to whom you might confide this sacred and pious deposit?

MRS. NEVILLE.

I have, indeed; but will she, can she accept——

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Can you doubt it? Have you not read my heart? Have you not always known the extent of its affection for you?

MRS. NEVILLE.

I have never doubted it; but you have already so many duties—so much to employ you——

MRS. WYNDHAM.

By increasing our duties, if we discharge them properly, we increase our means of happiness. Beside, Emily is getting beyond childhood: she will, I know, be happy to share with me the care of your dear child.

Emily hastily arose; she threw herself with irresistible emotion on her knees before Mrs. Neville and her mother.

“Hear me, O my dear Mamma!” she exclaimed: “suffer me, for I dare do nothing without your advice, suffer *me* to promise to be a mother to my Charlotte. Do not think me presumptuous; I am young, it is true, but my heart, in this affecting scene, has been chastened

“ and improved more than it could
“ have been by the experience of
“ years. I promise, my *heart pro-*
“ *mises*, the most unlimited atten-
“ tion, the tenderest love !”

Mrs. Neville, affected beyond expression, caught the charming girl in her arms, and her mother, eagerly snatching her from them, prest her to her bosom. “ But, Emily,” said she, repressing her emotion, “ do
“ you seriously reflect on what you
“ say ? Recollect, that in future
“ years your situation may change,
“ you may be involved in difficulty ;
“ shall you still be able to keep your
“ promise ?”

EMILY.

Ah, Mamma, I shall be her mo-

ther! and who knows better than you the extent of those duties that sacred name imposes? If I am happy, Charlotte shall share my felicity; if I am in distress, will she refuse to divide my cares? Ah, no; I am sure of it; for will she not be my daughter?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I have no longer any doubts. We have only to obtain Mrs. Neville's approbation. My dear Charlotte, it is true Emily is young, but her heart is good, and Charlotte will be still under my eyes.

MRS. NEVILLE.

Oh, do not suspect me of the slightest hesitation. This conversation has rendered me perfectly tran-

quilt: it has removed a weight from my mind; but where shall I find words to thank both my dear friends?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Cease, my dear friend, I beg you to cease such expressions. Never, never talk of thanks to us who are most happy to give you one moment of comfort. But this conversation has been too much for us all. Go, Emily, take a turn in the garden, and then return to us with your sisters.

Emily obeyed; she returned in about a quarter of an hour; Helen, Maria, and little Charlotte came with her. Mrs. Wyndham requested her to take care of them home, and excuse her to Mr. Wyndham, as she

meant to spend the remainder of the day with Mrs. Neville. They therefore took their leave, and as soon as they were in the coach, Emily placed little Charlotte on her knees, and kissed her with the tenderest affection; she asked her, if she would always love her, and received her promise to do so with extreme pleasure.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

PART SECOND.



Mrs. WYNDHAM returned in the evening, grave, but not melancholy; her affection for her husband and her children would not allow her to render them uncomfortable, by indulging the grief she really felt for the increasing illness of her friend; she exerted herself to promote their innocent enjoyments, and while they sat round the work table, at their different employments as usual,

she would not sadden by a sigh their affectionate hearts ; this was true sensibility, very different from that false and importunate feeling in which weak minds are so apt to indulge themselves*.

In the evening Emily generally took her French lesson ; she was reading the History of Charles the XIIth. King of Sweden, in French, and came at length to a very striking anecdote, which Mrs. Wyndham desired her to read again in English : this she did very readily, as it was a common practice with her mother

* See, on a subject similar to this, the admirable story of Mr. Wentworth, No. 57 of the Mirror (a periodical paper,) very deserving of attention.

to make her translate any remarkable passage as she read it.—After a description of a battle, which the King of Sweden had gained over the armies of the Czar of Muscovy, which greatly exceeded the number of his own, this anecdote follows :

“ The Muscovites, who were in number about thirty thousand, passed one by one before less than seven thousand Swedes. The soldiers, in passing by the King, threw down their arms, and the officers laid down their ensigns and colours ; Charles permitted all these men to repass the river, without retaining a single soldier prisoner. Then he entered victorious into Narva, accompanied by the Duc de Croi and the

other Muscovite officers; he returned to them all their swords; and knowing that they wanted money, and that the merchants of Narva would let them have nothing on credit, he sent a thousand ducats to the Duc de Croi, and five hundred to each of the other Muscovite officers, who were astonished at this treatment, of which they could not have formed an idea. At Narva was written an account of this victory, to send to Stockholm and to the allies of Sweden; but the King retrenched with his own hand all that was too advantageous to him, and too injurious to the Czar."

MR. WYNDHAM.

Emily is much improved; she

reads French much better than she did, and translates with spirit. That is the great thing to be desired in learning a language; as to little common-place phrases, or mere conversation, they may be amusing, and they may be at times serviceable, but a language can never be entirely useful till one can translate it liberally and easily.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I am quite of your opinion, and I dare say Arthur will study Latin with the same idea.

MR. WYNDHAM.

I hope so; he already ceases to *construe*, and begins to *translate*; besides, to a dead language, what I

have said, applies still more than to a living one.

HELEN.

Papa, what do you mean by a *dead* language?

MR. WYNDHAM.

A language, my dear, which is no longer spoken by any nation; formerly, Latin and Greek were the common language of large countries; at present they are only spoken by the learned of different nations, therefore they are called dead languages. A living language means a tongue commonly used by a whole people.—Such as at this time is the French, the English, the Italian, the German, and some others.

HELEN.

Thank you, Papa ; I understand very well now.

MR. WYNDHAM.

You are right to ask, my dear ; always request to have explained what you do not comprehend ; and if it be worth knowing, you will be sure of the best answer we can give you.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

But, Arthur, tell me which you think the most striking trait in the anecdote Emily has read ?

ARTHUR.

That, Mamma, where the Muscovites laid down their arms before a very small number of Swedes.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

And you, Emily, what say you?

EMILY.

I differ from Arthur; I admire most the generosity and modesty of Charles.

MRS. WYNDHAM (*with a smile.*)

I am of your opinion, perhaps, because we are females. Among the men, indeed, courage or bravery, may be deemed a preferable quality to clemency and moderation.

MR. WYNDHAM.

It is a more shining one, at least, and I fancy has dazzled Arthur's eyes; but, my boy, recollect how much more easy it is to be valiant than moderate. Valour is a sort of instinctive quality; few men are

without it; the noise and hurry of a battle alone would inspire it : nay, even in the weaker sex, a martial piece of music will frequently seem, for the time, to raise that enthusiastic spirit which is called courage. But after a hard fought battle, to repress that sort of madness, to become immediately cool, temperate, forgiving, and generous ; oh, my boy ! what an empire over the passions does this show ! what an equal and heroic frame of mind !

MRS. WYNDHAM.

What enhances the merit of Charles is, that he was very young ; this was his first victory of any consequence. I should scarcely have wondered, had circumstances so se-

ducing and inflammatory, put his moderation to flight.

ARTHUR.

I feel that I was wrong, and I believe, as you say, Sir, that I was indeed *dazzled* by the shining part of the story.

MR. WYNDHAM.

While you atone for a hasty decision by a candid allowance of its impropriety, there is no harm done; but accustom yourselves, children, to judge of actions for yourselves. Ask always, if they are *just*; be not deluded by a glaring outside; ask if no faith be infringed, if the laws of humanity are not broken. How seldom can the answer be in the affirmative, when we are reading the

lives of those who are called *heroes* ! History is often a dangerous study ; it is apt to instil false principles : there are few that a young person should read alone. Emily has always read with her mother, therefore her decisions are generally right.

Emily was delighted with her father's praises, but she showed her pleasure only by a modest animated blush, and downcast eyes ; she threw not a single glance of exultation on Arthur, who seemed a little hurt. Mr. Wyndham then produced some excellent maps of Sweden, Muscovy, and Denmark, in which they traced the *routes* of the Swedish and Russian armies ; during which, Helen and Maria went to bed, Emily and

Arthur sat an hour longer, and then retired. Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham spent the rest of the evening in talking over the events of the day. Mrs. Wyndham related, as well as her emotions would permit, Emily's behaviour in the morning, and they mutually rejoiced in the amiable and happy dispositions of their children. What felicity to them, thus to gratify the hearts of their parents! What misery to those wretched beings, who plant sorrow in the breasts of an indulgent father or mother!

After the children had taken their accustomed ramble the next morning, Emily went to call her Mamma, whom she was rather surprised not to have found in the breakfast room;

Mrs. Wyndham was almost drest ; and the following conversation passed between them :

EMILY.

Good morning to you, my dear Mamma ; I fear you are not quite well this morning, as you are later than usual.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Thank you, my dear child ! I have no material complaint, only having slept ill, I fell into a doze when I ought to have risen.

EMILY.

Nevertheless, Mamma, you look not quite well ; if my father would have permitted me to make his breakfast, you need not have risen.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

He would, I am sure, my love ; but I did not wish it ; I shall be quite well when I have breakfasted.

EMILY.

Allow me to say, Mamma, that I fear you exert yourself too much for our sakes ; I know you are always anxious to give us our lessons ; but if you are not well———

MRS. WYNDHAM.

You are too anxious, my dear ; I am really not indisposed. The uneasiness of my mind alone prevented my sleeping, and that will be rather lessened than increased by attending you.

EMILY.

Ah, Mamma !

MRS. WYNDHAM.

What, my child?—Speak plainly all your thoughts.

EMILY.

I know not if it is not a degree of impropriety to express them all. Perhaps I should intrude too much into what ought to be sacred to me, your sorrow and your reserve.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

No, my dear ; since the proof you gave me of sensibility and goodness of heart, yesterday, I consider you no longer as a child, you are worthy to be called my friend ;—speak, then without hesitation.

EMILY (*kissing her mother's hand.*)

With what gratitnde am I penetrated with a title so dear ! Ah !

Mamma, if ever I should render myself unworthy of it, what punishment would be great enough for me?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

You would find one in your heart!

EMILY.

But, Mamma, suffer me then to ask, how is it possible for you to preserve your tranquillity, your composure of mind, when I am sure you suffer so much? If I am distressed, I shed tears, I am unable to attend to any thing.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Yet, Emily, you are less overcome than you have seen Miss Somerville.

EMILY.

That is true, Mamma; when her little brother was ill, she lay all day

on a bed ; she cried, and took no nourishment, repeating continually that she was distracted with grief.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

In the mean time, Mrs. Somerville sat continually by her sick child, she allowed herself no time to rest ; she attended to every thing respecting him herself. She had no assistant in whom she could confide. Tell me, Emily, had you been Miss Somerville, what should you have done?

EMILY.

Certainly, Mamma, I should have stifled my grief, and endeavoured to assist, and comfort my mother.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I trust you would have done so ;

thus you see, in a well-regulated mind, *duty* is superior to *feeling*. We ought never to *indulge* the one at the expence of the other. Miss Somerville had lived a good deal with an aunt of her's, who has praised and inflamed that nervous kind of sensibility you have observed ; thus her mind is weakened, her tears flow upon the most trifling occasion ; she does not endeavour to restrain them ; she even believes them meritorious ; and thus she wears away her own constitution, and renders herself a helpless burden on the stronger minds of her friends. This is a character against which I would have you be particularly guarded, as it arises from the over indulgence

of our best feelings, and the line is easily passed before we are aware.

EMILY.

Ah, Mamma! I am in no danger of falling into error, while I take you for my example.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I strive, at least, to give you the best in my power; it is the duty of a mother so to do. Come, my dear, your father will want his breakfast.

After breakfast, Mrs. Wyndham sent a servant to know how Mrs. Neville did; and heard, with pleasure, she found herself something better; and therefore proposed to Mr. Wyndham, that they should spend the afternoon with their neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney;

she intended to take only Emily and Arthur with her, leaving Helen and Maria with an old faithful servant, who was accustomed to take care of them when Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham were absent.

This plan was accordingly put into execution ; they called on Mrs. Neville in their way, whom they found tolerably well. About half past six o'clock, they reached Mr. Sidney's house, and on entering the drawing-room, found only Mr. and Mrs. Sidney ; neither of their children (they had two) were present. In a few minutes Mrs. Sydney rung the bell and ordered the servant to send Edward and Harriet into the drawing room, as their visitors were come.

Presently Miss Sidney ran into the room, and without regarding either Mrs. or Miss Wyndham, exclaimed; "Mamma, Ned says he won't come."

MRS. SIDNEY.

Very pretty, indeed! pray what is he doing?

HARRIET.

He is making a cart; and when it is done, we are going to draw it about the court full of stones.

MRS. SIDNEY.

We! what have you been helping him?

HARRIET.

Yes, I have, and you cannot think how droll it will be.

MRS. SIDNEY.

However that is, you will please to sit down now; don't you see Miss Wyndham?

HARRIET (*pouting.*)

Yes; but I want to go and finish the cart.

MRS. SIDNEY.

Fie, fie! I'm ashamed of you! Come and speak to Miss Wyndham.

Emily rose to meet her, but Miss Sidney hung down her head, and would not speak; her frock was dirty, her hair looked as if it had not been disentangled for a week, her face was heated, and a very pretty little girl looked extremely plain and disagreeable.

MRS. SIDNEY.

Do, Mr. Sidney, speak to her; you see she does not mind me.

MR. SIDNEY.

How now, Miss! What's here to do? Why don't you do as your mother bids you? I shall take you in hand presently, if you don't behave better. Don't speak to her Miss Wyndham, she is not worth your notice.

Miss Sidney then muttered a few words to Emily, who felt quite confused for her; they sat down together, and Emily tried, in vain, to make Miss Sidney speak. In about ten minutes the door burst open, and in rushed young Sidney, with

a face like scarlet, and crying violently.

MR. SIDNEY.

What's the matter, Ned? What do you cry for?

EDWARD.

Oh, my mouse! my mouse!

MR. SIDNEY.

Well, what's the matter with your mouse?

EDWARD.

Oh, Papa, Jack Williams has snatched it away!

MR. SIDNEY.

Jack Williams snatched your mouse away! I'll *Jack Williams* him, a young rascal! Where is he?

EDWARD.

Run down the lane, Papa!

MR. SIDNEY.

Come, my dear, don't cry, and I'll soon fetch it back again, if Mr. Wyndham will excuse me for a few minutes.

EDWARD.

And I'll go too, Papa, and give him a good threshing; when you are there, he won't dare to strike again.

MRS. SIDNEY.

Hark ye, Ned; bring none of your nasty mice here, I hate the very sight of them. Don't you want to go, Miss Harriet? I suppose you would help your brother to beat Jack Williams.

Harriet looked very sulky at this, and as the tea was then over, Mrs.

Sidney desired her to take Miss Wyndham into her play-room; tho' I suppose, added she, you have done with toys now, Miss Wyndham.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Emily is always happy to do whatever her young companions like.

MRS. SIDNEY.

Aye, Ma'am, you seem very happy in your children. I am sure I can never keep mine in order; though, I believe, I take as much pains, and scold them as much as any body.

Mrs. Wyndham could not help smiling at her idea of educating children; however, she was too polite to say any thing, so the two young ladies went into the play-

room, where the following conversation passed :

HARRIET.

How cross Mamma is ! she always scolds so when any body's here. Don't you think she is very ill-natured ?

EMILY.

Pardon me for contradicting you, I do not think so, indeed.

HARRIET.

What ! not ill-natured, to hinder me from doing the cart, when it would have been so nice and so pretty !

EMILY.

Probably she thought you would overheat yourself. Besides, she

wished me to have the pleasure of talking with you.

HARRIET.

Oh, but she knows I hate to sit *stuck up* with *the company*. I don't so much care now you and I are together; but you looked so grave when I came in, I thought I should not like you! I am sure if I had been you, I should have laughed!

EMILY.

At what should I have laughed?

HARRIET.

Oh, to hear Mamma scold so, and to see me look so like a fool.

EMILY.

Indeed I am very sorry, it is such a sad thing to incur the displeasure of one's mother.

HARRIET.

Oh, not at all ; I don't care, she won't say any more to me ; and if I had cried then, I knew she would let me go ; but I was ashamed, because you and your Mamma were there ; besides, I was a little afraid of Papa. Does your Papa humour your brother more than he does you ?

EMILY.

I hardly know what you mean ; Papa humours neither of us.

HARRIET,

Why, he looks very good-natured.

EMILY.

He is, indeed, much too good-natured to *humour* his children ; he is uniformly kind and indulgent

when we behave well, and constantly strict and resolute when we deserve his displeasure.

HARRIET. *Yes, indeed.*

Well, that seems very odd ! As to Ned, Papa never contradicts him nor Mamma neither ; but she does me, and is as angry as can be sometimes.

They then talked about the books and playthings ; the latter, indeed, were in general uninteresting to Miss Wyndham, who was too well informed to derive much amusement from mere toys ; she was, however, also too well bred and too humble to shew the least contempt for any thing her companion thought entertaining. Amongst the books she

found several with which she was well acquainted: but though they were sadly abused, Miss Sidney said she had not read any of them; and thus all conversation respecting their merits was precluded. Having looked them over, Emily walked to the window, to examine a bird which hung there in a handsome cage.

EMILY.

What a pretty bird! it is a goldfinch, I see.

HARRIET.

Yes, and a fine songster, I assure you.

EMILY.

Did you take him from the nest?

HARRIET.

No; he was about a year old

when I had him. Ned caught him in a trap in the winter.

EMILY.

Poor thing! was he not very uneasy when he was first confined?

HARRIET.

Oh, I don't know; he used to flutter about sometimes, but we did not mind that.

EMILY.

He is very tame now; he does not seem at all disturbed when I stand by the cage.

HARRIET.

That is because he does not see you.

EMILY.

Not see me! How is that?

HARRIET.

Because he is blind.

EMILY.

Blind! Ah, poor little creature.
By what accident did that happen
to him?

HARRIET.

No accident at all; Ned did it on
purpose.

EMILY.

On purpose! Oh, how could he
be so cruel?

HARRIET.

He did it to make him sing the
better, with a red hot knitting nee-
dle.

EMILY (*pale and shuddering.*)

Oh, how shocking! Were you not
grieved?

HARRIET.

Not I; I liked it, because it's my bird. If I had not liked it, it should not have been done, I promise you.

EMILY.

Is it possible you should have given your consent? Oh, if you knew how melancholy it is to be blind.

HARRIET.

La, why a bird does not mind, you know!

EMILY.

Not mind! Do you think, then, they do not feel? Do you think they have no pleasure in seeing the light? Why, then, do they sing when it first dawns?

HARRIET.

Oh, that is because it is natural to them.

EMILY.

Yes, to rejoice in the day-light! Ah, poor little wretch! would I could restore you to sight.

HARRIET.

But you cannot think how much better he sings.

EMILY.

I should not wish to hear him; I should think every note a melancholy expression of his sorrow, or a reproach to me for having caused it!

HARRIET.

What odd notions you have! Where did you pick them up?

EMILY.

If you mean the notion of hurting no creature whatever, I gained it, as I did all I know, from my father and mother. Beside that, I never had the least desire to hurt any thing; and as to blinding any poor creature, I know too well how dreadful it must be, to be capable of doing it.

HARRIET.

Why, how do you know any thing about it?

EMILY.

Alas! I have a sister who is blind!

HARRIET.

Poor thing! I should be sorry for her.

EMILY.

Then why are you not sorry for your bird?

HARRIET.

Oh, because a bird is not like a little girl.

EMILY.

That is true, they are not parallel cases, but there is a resemblance. The bird does not feel so much; but that does not prove it does not feel at all.

HARRIET.

Well, I declare I am sorry; but nobody ever told me it was cruel, so how should I know?

Here they were interrupted by a knocking at the window, which Harriet opened; it was Master Sid-

ney, who called to her to come round to the drawing-room window, where she would see something “*monstrous droll.*”

Harriet scampered away, and Emily followed her; they found young Edward and Mr. Sidney standing at the window; Arthur was quietly seated by his father, who with Mrs. Wyndham, and Mrs. Sidney, were at another part of the room.

HARRIET.

Ned, what have you got to show me?

EDWARD.

Oh, my mouse! Papa got it away from Jack Williams, but his leg was

broken, so I gave it to the cat—see how she tosses it about.

HARRIET.

Where, where? Oh, I see her! La, it's running away!

MR. SIDNEY.

No, she has caught it again; look how still she is now.

Emily shuddering to see the poor little animal so tormented, retired from the window. Mrs. Sidney then asked Arthur why he did not go and look at the mouse; and he who generally spoke his thoughts, sometimes not very politely, said, "Because I think it both cowardly and cruel."

MRS. SIDNEY.

How so, my dear?

ARTHUR.

It is cruel to suffer any thing to be tormented, and cowardly, because the poor creature is lame, and without that defence which nature intended it to have.

MRS. SIDNEY.

Oh, but a mouse is such a nasty creature! I never care how they are tormented, because I hate them to such a degree. Besides one must have them destroyed.

ARTHUR.

Yes, Ma'am, but then I would have it with the least pain possible; and especially I would not give them to the cat when they are lame.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

But, Arthur, you are not very polite.

MRS. SIDNEY.

Oh, I like him the better for that; I hate a boy that's afraid of speaking his mind.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

But then he should not do it at the risk of offending any one.

After a little more talk about the mouse, whose distress seemed to afford great amusement to the party at the window, Mr. Wyndham's carriage was announced, and that amiable family, with pleasure, took leave of a circle so different from themselves. In their way home they talked of their visit, and when Mrs.

Wyndham heard of the poor goldfinch, she warmly expressed her abhorrence of such extreme cruelty; soon after the coach stopped, and nothing more was said on the subject. The next morning, however, as it proved wet, the children, instead of playing in the garden, amused themselves in the same room where their mother sat at work; and here the following conversation passed:

HELEN.

Come, Emily, tell us what you did at Mrs. Sidney's last night.

EMILY.

Nothing agreeable, I can assure you. I went with Miss Sidney into her play room, but her books were

torn to pieces, and then we came back into the drawing room to see the cat play with a mouse.

MARIA.

The cat play with a mouse! but did she not hurt it? Mamma always says, "poor thing," when old Tom catches one.

EMILY.

Oh, yes, she hurt it enough, I believe, but they did not *mind that*, as Miss Sidney said, when I asked her if her goldfinch was not unhappy when they first confined him.

HELEN.

Not mind hurting any thing! I fancy this Miss Sidney is not very good.

EMILY.

No, truly; for, if you had been there when she first came into the room—

HELEN.

Why, what did she do?

EMILY.

Her cap was torn half off, her hair was tangled, and her face dirty; and she came in bawling, just like this—
(*mimicking*) “Mamma, Ned says he
“won’t come!”

ARTHUR (*laughing.*)

Ah! that is just like her, with her arms swinging, and her mouth open.

HELEN.

But did she not speak to you?

EMILY.

No, nor to Mamma neither; and

then she almost cried because she wanted to help her brother to make a cart.

HELEN.

To make a cart! Was that a proper employment for a young lady?

EMILY.

No, indeed! and when she was told to speak to me, she came up with her head poking down, and her finger in her mouth, muttering so —“ How d’ye do, Miss.”

MARIA.

Oh, dear, how strange!

Ah, that is exactly her; but now, Emily, tell us how she looked when her Mamma asked her, if she would not like to help her brother to beat Jack Williams?

EMILY.

Oh, she pouted out her lips so ; then she crammed her fingers into her mouth, and then leered round to see if I was looking at her ! but, Arthur, how did Mr. Ned get his mouse again ?

ARTHUR.

Oh, you never saw such a cowardly fellow ; when we overtook the boy who had got it, Mr. Sidney gave him two or three blows and took it from him, but, poor thing ! one of its legs was broken, so then Mr. Ned cried like a mad thing ! and flew at the boy, beating and scratching him without mercy, and the boy did not dare strike again. At last Mr. Sidney said, “ Come away

“Ned, let him alone now ; but if he
“affronts you again, I’ll horsewhip
“him handsomely.”—“Do it now,
“Papa,” said Ned ; “do it now !”
“Fie Master Sidney,” said I, “two
“against one is not fair.” “Oh,
“who minds *fair*,” said he, “with
“such a beggar boy as that !” and
Mr. Sidney never told him he was
wrong.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

In telling us that, Arthur, have
you not told us the very reason of
Master Sidney’s behaviour ?

ARTHUR.

What, that his father did not teach
him better ? Yes, I believe so.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Tell me, then, is he most an ob-
ject of ridicule or pity ?

ARTHUR (*hesitating a moment.*)

Of pity, to be sure!

MRS. WYNDHAM.

And, Emily, do you not think the same cause may have produced the same effect in Miss Sidney?

EMILY.

Yes, Ma'am, for she said nobody had ever told her it was wrong to torment her bird.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Then, why have you ridiculed her?

EMILY.

I——I——did not mean any harm, Mamma!

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Did you not mean to make her appear an absurd, ridiculous charac-

ter? Did you not mean to make your brother and sisters laugh at her?

EMILY.

Yes, Ma'am.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Could you, then, had you it in your power, do her greater unkindness? In making people ridiculous, we injure them extremely. A nickname, as it is called, given to children, grows up with them; they are known by it; those who are not acquainted with them form a light, if not a bad opinion of their characters; in the mean time, perhaps, they correct the faults or the follies that gave rise to it, but that is not known, while their nick-names precede their entrance into every com-

pany. It is the same with every species of ridicule ; if your brother and sisters were to hear of Miss Sidney ten years hence, they would connect with her name the awkward, disagreeable idea you have given them of her character : they might, perhaps, unguardedly, express the opinion they had formed of her, and thus punish her for the faults she might long ago have corrected. Do you perceive to what extent this might injure her ? It might deprive her of friends, perhaps of an establishment for life !

EMILY.

Oh, Mamma, I have indeed been very wrong ; I beg of you to pardon me.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I allow to you, that Miss Sidney's behaviour was very blameable, and therefore, to *me*, in whom you have a perfect confidence, I admit you to remark on it, but not to do it with ill-nature or severity. I expected from the goodness of your heart, pity and generous allowance for Miss Sidney, who wants the advantages you are more happily possessed of. Do you believe, that without better advice and example, you should have been better than Miss Sidney?

EMILY.

Oh, no, indeed; I must be both ungrateful and presumptuous if I could believe it.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Even were there no excuse to be made for Harriet Sidney's faults, I could not allow you to employ *ridicule* to expose them. Personal ridicule, in general, arises from envy or ill-nature, a mean desire of lowering those virtues we cannot reach, or a cruel wish to expose those follies we take a malicious pleasure in observing. Who, indeed, is there, in whom nothing ridiculous can be found? The most perfect characters, by a little exaggeration, may be made ridiculous.

EMILY,

I see, Mamma, that I have been guilty of a very great fault; I am

much concerned for it, and willing to submit to any punishment you shall think proper. But permit me to observe, since I do not do so out of perverseness, on what you last said; for instance, what is there ridiculous in you ?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

You pay me a great compliment, Emily, which for once I will accept.——But you will, perhaps, scarcely believe so striking a picture was once drawn of me by a young mimic of my acquaintance, who was not aware of my seeing her, that I could not help laughing at it myself. My little cough, the trick I have of rather leaning my head when I

speak, and the slow manner which I have of talking, were imitated, and made to appear ridiculous!

EMILY.

Oh, Mamma, but these are not ridiculous.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Not in themselves, perhaps, but by a little exaggeration, which a true mimic never spares, they become so; nay, Emily, even my tender attention to my grandmother, who was very old, and required constant assiduity, was set in the same point of view; it was deemed a disturbing and importunate "*roué about nothing*," and affectation of fondness and attention.

EMILY.

Ah, Mamma, what an odious character! Were you not very angry?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

By no means; I pitied my young acquaintance very much; it had been laughed at, and she was encouraged to mimic every body, and no one had ever told her it was wrong.

EMILY.

Well, I shall never mimic any body again. But, Mamma, you used to laugh very much at Mr. Harris, when he imitated some of the players in London.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

That is true, but this was not per-

sonal ridicule; he merely imitated the particular style of speaking in each; some of them, you remember, were not laughable, only those of the comic actors, and that because they were exactly like. He also imitated the manners of sailors and clowns; but that was not personal ridicule, it was aimed at no *one* in particular.

EMILY.

Then that is allowable.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Under certain circumstances it may be, but it requires a very nice judgement to direct it, and in a *woman* it never can be right. It discovers an inclination to set herself off; besides, it must be accompa-

nied by a self possession, inconsistent with the modesty of the female character. Every approach to what is called *humour*, ought to be discouraged in a woman; it puts her too forward and too much upon a level with an actress; add to that, it makes her many enemies. People who see how much she excels in general imitation, believe she is equally capable of personal mimicry, and that she is only restrained by their presence. They fancy, that when she is under no restraint, she is less guarded, and think that they may be of the number of those she ridicules; thus she is shunned and hated.

EMILY.

I see, Mamma, the force of all

you have urged, and I am quite determined never more to be a mimic ; but at present I hope you pardon me.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Since you have not been wilfully and obstinately wrong, I pardon you, my dear ; in the mean time, however, you have given me great pain, because I had hoped you had more reflection ; thus I find myself under the necessity of imposing a punishment. I meant to have given you Ward's Natural History to read to-day, but the childishness you have shown, will prevent me from putting it into your hands till a month from this time ; if during that space, you commit no serious

fault, I shall believe this was a mere temporary return to the faults of infancy, and that you are capable of relishing the useful information contained in that pleasing book ; if, on the contrary, you again do wrong, I shall still longer defer the pleasure I have promised you.

Emily felt excessively hurt and disappointed on the occasion : however, she felt too much the constant justice of her mother to have murmured, even if she had not been convinced that in this instance she deserved her punishment.

In the afternoon Mrs. Wyndham went to Mrs. Neville's, whom she found so extremely ill, that she could not prevail on herself to quit her,

but sent word home that she should remain with her friend that night. In the morning Mr. Wyndham sent to know how Mrs. Neville was, and heard with great concern, that she could not live many hours; he communicated this intelligence to Emily, and immediately went to Mrs. Neville's house, leaving Emily excessively distressed. She felt the most restless anxiety, accompanied by ardent wishes to alleviate her mother's anguish; she had an incessant struggle to restrain her tears; but a wish to emulate the fortitude and equanimity of her mother prevailed on her to repress them as much as possible, and to sit down with her sisters, supplying, as well as she could, the

place of Mrs. Wyndham. About four in the afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham returned, bringing with them little Charlotte Neville. Mrs. Wyndham immediately retired to her own room, while Mr. Wyndham led little Charlotte into the parlour, and sent for Emily, who, pale and trembling, appeared immediately.

Mr. Wyndham was evidently much affected, and the following short dialogue passed :

MR. WYNDHAM.

Emily, have you seen your mother?

EMILY.

No, Sir ; she is gone to her own room.

MR. WYNDHAM.

Do not then disturb her; you guess what has happened?

EMILY.

I fear so indeed!

MR. WYNDHAM.

Charlotte is now *your child*!

CHARLOTTE (*crying.*)

My dear Emily they will not let me see Mamma.

EMILY (*embracing her with tears.*)

You must not desire it.

CHARLOTTE.

But Mamma will be uneasy if I do not go to her; she always chooses to have me in her room.

MR. WYNDHAM.

My dear child, you must ask to see your Mamma no more.

CHARLOTTE.

So you told me before ; but why ?
Let me see her ; she will wake if I
call her.

EMILY.

No, my dear ; you cannot wake
her, nor ought you to wish it ; she
is free from pain, and gone to a bet-
ter world, where she will be happy !

CHARLOTTE.

Is Mamma happy ? And will she
never cry again, nor feel pain ?

EMILY.

Never.

CHARLOTTE.

I am glad of that ; but shall I not
go to her ? She used to say I should.

MR. WYNDHAM.

Yes, my dear, when God pleases.

CHARLOTTE.

I hope it will please God to let me very soon.

MR. WYNDHAM.

But it depends on yourself. If you are not good as long as you live; if you do not pray to God always, you will never go to that happy world where your Mamma is now.

CHARLOTTE.

Oh, teach me, then, to be very good, indeed I will try; and tell me what I must say when I pray to God to let me go to Mamma?

MR. WYNDHAM.

You must say, "Grant, O God!
" that through life I may do thy
" will, and when I die be taken to
" thy everlasting happiness."

CHARLOTTE.

Oh, do not fear I shall forget it, I shall say it every day twenty times.

Mr. Wyndham then left them, and Emily, though deeply affected, endeavoured to lead the little girl to other subjects, in which at times she succeeded; but Charlotte frequently spoke of her mother in a way which affected all who heard her. Mrs. Wyndham remained alone till the evening, when she admitted Emily, who remained with her till bed time. The next morning Mrs. Wyndham returned to her family, composed, though deeply dejected, thus ennobling grief by not yielding to its passionate impulses; though for many weeks it required a violent

struggle between her reason and her feelings, to appear with that dignified serenity she so much wished to retain. Emily struck by this example of fortitude, determined to profit by it; it carried a lesson to her heart, which she never afterwards forgot. From this time she strove, with undeviating attention, to correct her own faults, that she might be a worthy pattern for Charlotte to follow; she ceased not to exert the utmost tenderness and patience towards the little girl, who in being an orphan, seemed to have a sufficient claim on the affections of this amiable family, and shared equally with Maria the fondness of them all. Helen became very much

attached to her, and Emily vied with her sisters in assiduous attendance on her.

Emily, however, notwithstanding her earnest wishes to do right, was too young not to err sometimes, an instance of which occurred one day, in her expressing some extravagant wishes, and particularly that she could know what some relations of her's were doing who lived in a distant country; Mrs. Wyndham smiled, and told her she would give her a story to read, which had been written by a friend for her on a similar occasion, when she was a girl. Accordingly in the evening, when her sisters were gone to bed, Emily read aloud the following story.

PART THIRD.

ELFRIDA, OR THE MIRROR.

A FAIRY TALE.

THE limitation of man's knowledge has been, in all ages, a theme equally chosen by the moralist and the discontented. The first of these characters has from thence deduced many profitable conclusions to the chastisement of our present vanity, and the exaltation of our future hope. While the last has murmured at this confinement of his facul-

ties, which reach not even to the perfect understanding of those things more immediately under his inspection, and are consequently very unequal to the discernment of future events or distant circumstances. To check, in some degree, the dissatisfaction of the latter, and to add strength to the reasonings of the former, the tale of Elfrida shall attempt; nay more, in spite of its puerile appearance, it shall strive to place the subject in another point of view, and consider the narrowness of our capacity in this state of our existence, as one great source of the comfort we enjoy.

Fashioned by the hand of nature with every charm to captivate the senses, Elfrida possessed also a soul

of the highest order ; and that aspiring genius which grasps eagerly at knowledge, and having received all that its instructors have to bestow, like Alexander, weeps for more *worlds of information* to subdue. Elfrida was the daughter of an English baron, who was high in the favour of the third brave Edward. In the various wars of that king, Elfrida's father took an active part. She was now approaching the close of her sixteenth year, when Fitz-Richard was summoned from his castle to attend his sovereign to the Scottish wars. But a few months had he been freed from the weight of his armour, yet he resumed it with alacrity, and felt a regret only in parting from his fair and innocent child. He left her

overwhelmed with grief, under the care of her governess and her woman, for her mother had slept many years in the silent tomb. Elfrida, who enthusiastically loved her father, and centred in him all the affections of a very sensible heart, lamented his departure with incessant regret. The solitude in which she had been educated, and which, during his residence in it, had for her every charm, now became insipid. She frequently wandered from her governess and her woman to indulge her sorrow, and waited for hours, at the extremity of the Park, in the hope of soon receiving intelligence from the Baron. One day, when she had finished her morning studies, which were become uninteresting to her, she retired from

the heat of the sun into a natural sort of grotto, formed in a rock, through which perpetually ran a clear stream, and whose entrance was shaded by a luxuriant growth of jessamine and honey-suckle, which had been planted and reared by the *sportive* labour of Fitz-Richard and Elfrida. This place recalled to her mind the image of her father in all its force. “He has been gone,” she exclaimed, “three weeks, and “I have heard from him but once. “Perhaps at this moment, fatigued “by toilsome marches, he faints beneath the heat of this burning sun. “In vain may he now wish for his “Elfrida to prepare the simple fruits “which she has so often decorated “with bands of flowers for his noon-

“ tide refreshment. While I am en-
 “ joying the luxurious coolness of
 “ his favourite retreat, to what
 “ perils may my father be exposed!
 “ Shortly, too, new dangers will sur-
 “ round him; the dangers of un-
 “ sparing war! His valour will place
 “ him foremost in the ranks of bat-
 “ tle, and who can tell”—The sug-
 gession which her heart inspired, her
 tongue refused to express; a shower
 of tears fell from her eyes, she trem-
 bled and was silent. At length she
 proceeded—“ Oh that I could be at
 “ this moment informed of thy wel-
 “ fare, my father; that some bene-
 “ ficent being would instruct me
 “ how thou art employed! Why,
 “ alas! has Heaven denied the pri-
 “ vilege of knowing how those we

“love are situated during their absence from us ?” Elfrida had no sooner pronounced these words, than she was struck with a sense of their impropriety, and hastened to implore the pardon of Heaven for an expression which her delicacy of feeling taught her immediately to renounce as presumptuous. Still, however, her heart acknowledged a desire, that a constant information of her father’s situation might be made consistent with the will of Heaven.

Deeply engaged in these reflections, Elfrida scarcely heard a slight noise in the back part of the cavern; but, at length, imagining she heard the sound of light footsteps, she raised her eyes, and started on beholding a figure, whose appearance

spoke it of a different order of beings. The stature of this form scarcely exceeded a foot in height, and its dimensions were proportionably small. Its features, however diminutive, were regularly beautiful, and its countenance bespoke tender benevolence. On its head was placed a turban of the finest blue, the texture of which seemed like the leaf of a flower; it was ornamented with a circle of precious stones, which though small, was of an incredible brightness. Its garment was a sort of a robe descending in folds to the ground, of the most exquisite whiteness, and shining like the slight threads which in the autumn are seen floating over the grass at sunset. In one hand it held an ivory

wand, and in the other a *mirror* of the most admirable polish.

Elfrida, startled by this supernatural appearance, would have fled, but was withheld by a sort of irresistible impulse. Her eyes eagerly surveyed the shining stranger, who advancing, said, “ Be not alarmed
 “ Elfrida, for innocence and good
 “ ness of heart like yours have from
 “ me nothing to fear. You have
 “ heard, and, with propriety, des-
 “ pised a thousand idle tales of the
 “ fairies, which have no existence
 “ but in imagination; you have
 “ rightly judged it inconsistent with
 “ the wisdom of the Supreme Being,
 “ to suffer a set of inferior agents
 “ to torment mankind with impu-
 “ nity. But learn, fair Elfrida,

“ that, although they exist not for
“ purposes so vain, they yet *do* ex-
“ ist. Under the control of supe-
“ rior power, they are permitted by
“ their invisible agency to direct the
“ smaller concerns of man’s life,
“ once in an age their personal ap-
“ pearance is allowed to some fa-
“ voured mortal, who, like yourself,
“ possesses a heart simple and unse-
“ duced by the allurements of vice.
“ I have heard your regret and
“ your wishes, and to me it is given,
“ though I cannot remove the one,
“ yet to fulfil the other. Your fa-
“ ther is gone on a service of dan-
“ ger, but it is also a service of
“ glory. He is himself perfectly
“ satisfied with his situation, nor
“ would he exchange it for the in-

“ glorious repose of a peaceful station. The only alloy to his satisfaction is the necessity of quitting you, but he anticipates the time of his return with hopeful pleasure. Be it your task to improve the interval of his absence by an unremitting attention to your improvement in those accomplishments he wishes you to possess. Do not, by vain regrets, impair the health and lavish the sensibility on which Fitz-Richard depends for his future happiness.”—Elfrida, who had listened at first with some degree of terror, which insensibly wore away, now hastened to assure the fairy, that she was perfectly convinced of the propriety of her remarks, and to promise that she

would in future more steadily endeavour to repress a too great sensibility. “ You say well, gentle Elfri-
“ da,” replied the fairy, “ and I read
“ in your heart the sincerity of your
“ purposes. But why wander the
“ eyes of my fair favourite? I see
“ you are curious to know more of
“ me. I am the queen of the fairies,
“ and to me is particularly allotted
“ the care of the young and beau-
“ tiful. This wand is the source of
“ my power, and this mirror, Elfrida,
“ shall be to you if you still wish it,
“ all you have asked from Heaven.
“ Tell me, do you wish to be constant-
“ ly informed of your father’s situa-
“ tion? I see you do. Take, then, this
“ mirror ; three times in every day,
“ (with the interval of half an hour

“ between each time) for five minutes it shall depict to you the exact image and employment of your father.” Elfrida eagerly extended her hand, and, for the first time losing her attention to the fairy, she cast her eyes on the so much desired gift. She there beheld the image of her father, who walked conversing with a friend; his countenance expressed health and happiness. Elfrida’s tears flowed with pleasure at the sight, and when she had gazed on it till it vanished, she turned eagerly round, and thanked repeatedly the kind and generous fairy. “ You are then satisfied with my gift, Elfrida,” said she, with a smile; “ you persist in the determination of accepting it? Ah, mis-

“ taken——but I leave you to ex-
 “ perience the choice you have
 “ made ! If at any time you become
 “ tired of possessing the mirror,
 “ come hither again, and when you
 “ have dipped it in the water of
 “ this stream, I will appear and re-
 “ ceive it from you.”—The fairy
 then disappeared, and Elfrida, after
 pausing for a few minutes to recover
 from her astonishment, returned to
 the castle. To her governess alone,
 in whom she had perfect confi-
 dence, she repeated the circum-
 stance of this surprising vision ; at first
 the governess treated it as a vapour
 of the imagination, but, on seeing
 the mirror, began to believe in the
 truth of the story. Elfrida, that her
 mind might be perfectly satisfied,

begged her to cast her eyes on it at the same time with herself; the governess complied, and they both saw the Baron Fitz-Richard. He was on horseback; and while they gazed, the horse fell and threw his rider to the ground: Elfrida shrieked, and dropped the mirror! Instantly she caught it again from the earth; but alas, in that moment the picture had vanished! The excess of her anxiety and dread may, perhaps, be conceived; she wept, she trembled, and at intervals giving herself up to the horrors of her imagination, she screamed aloud in agony. Thus passed the allotted half hour which must intervene ere she could again see any thing; the moment it expired, she seized the glass, and be-

held her father extended on a couch pale and languid; his arm was bound round by a scarf, and Elfrida believed he had broken it; this was all that appeared, and Elfrida remained as unsatisfied as ever. In this interval her governess endeavoured to impress upon the mind of Elfrida the folly of seeking to know more than Providence had revealed; but Elfrida, distracted with anxiety, heard her not, waiting with her eyes fixed on the mirror, till the allotted half hour should expire. At length the heavy minutes departed, and the same scene was again presented to her view. And now the mirror had for that day lost its power; in vain Elfrida wept and rejected sleep. Ere the night was

spent, an express arrived, who brought letters from the Baron. Elfrida opened them with impatience; they were dated five days before; and though they gave the most satisfactory accounts of his health at that time, Elfrida, who knew what had passed since, received no pleasure from them. She threw them aside, and waited for the morning dawn with a passionate impatience, which destroyed the natural sweetness of her temper. Ere it arrived, however, sleep closed her weary eyes, and she opened them, in consequence of the sun beams which darted through her windows. Angry with herself for having slept, she seized the mirror, and saw her father at the door of his tent; he

raised his hands in thankfulness to Heaven, and Elfrida at once perceived that his arm had not been broken, and that by the quickness of his recovery, in all probability, the accident had been comparatively slight. She first ardently thanked Heaven for his escape, and then exclaimed, “Ah, mischievous present, “ what grief has it caused me! Had “ I not accepted this mirror, these “ letters would have been to me a “ source of delight; I should have “ known nothing of a circumstance, “ which has been in itself of little “ consequence, and which, even “ had it been worse, I could not “ have remedied. I will return this “ mirror to the fairy, and hence- “ forth content myself with the gifts

“which Heaven has bestowed.” Her governess applauded her resolve, and Elfrida hastened to the grotto; she impatiently dipped the mirror into the stream, and the fairy immediately appeared. “Take back your fatal gift,” said the fair Elfrida, “I have already proved the misery which attends it, already have discovered the folly of my wishes.”—“With pleasure I receive it,” replied the fairy, “a pleasure which arises from the joy I feel in such an instance of your prudence. I knew, when I gave it to you, the sorrow which must accompany the knowledge you desired, but scarcely hoped that you would have been so soon convinced of its inefficacy to make you happy.

“ 'Tis true, I might have made the
“ gift more perfect; but if it had
“ continually reflected the image of
“ your father, you would have neg-
“ lected every thing to gaze upon it,
“ and your time would have passed
“ unmarked by improvement. I see
“ you have no desire of the kind re-
“ maining; but, Elfrida, although
“ this gift is useless to you, yet the
“ experience it has brought will not
“ prove so. Henceforth you will be
“ convinced, when you are tempted
“ to form *wishes*, that, if granted,
“ they would in all probability con-
“ duce as little to your real happi-
“ ness as this has done. None
“ could wear a more specious ap-
“ pearance than this, which seemed
“ prompted by filial affection; but

“suspect in future, Elfrida, that every desire, of whatever sort, is unreasonable and improper, if it leads to *discontent*.”

The fairy ended, and Elfrida, after sincerely thanking her, returned to the castle, with a mind deeply impressed by the circumstances which had befallen her.

This story, and the comments it occasioned, employed the remainder of the evening. Emily requested to know why her mother objected to Helen's and Maria's hearing it, and Mrs. Wyndham explained to her the difficulty which such young minds would have had to separate the fiction from the truth of the story.

A few days afterwards Emily and Helen were invited by a lady, who

lived near them, to accompany Mrs. Wyndham to hear her concert, which she had formed at her own house, to celebrate the birth-day of her son; this party they anticipated with the greatest delight; they were both extremely fond of music, and it formed, indeed, almost the only pleasure which Helen could enjoy without imperfection; opportunities of hearing good music in the country are scarce, and thus the two girls fixed all their wishes for several days before on the accomplishment of this scheme. They were accordingly dressed to go, and the carriage was ordered, when a message arrived from the lady to whose house they were going, saying, that she was very sorry it was

not in her power to receive them, as she had just heard of the death of a relation, which obliged her to renounce her intended plan for the evening. Emily immediately said, " Poor Mrs. Selwyn, how sorry I am for her !" and seemed to forget her own disappointment in concern for the cause ; but Helen directly burst into tears, and seemed quite overwhelmed with mortification. Mrs. Wyndham took no notice of her for a few minutes, hoping she would of herself overcome the impatient sorrow into which she had fallen ; but perceiving she indulged it, and sullenly rejected the soothings of her sisters, she spoke to her.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Helen you both surprise and vex me! my dear child, you must not suffer yourself to be thus overcome by such a trifle. Cease crying, Helen, and speak to me.

Helen, however, continued crying with great violence, and as Maria attempted to caress and console her, she pushed her away with an impatient air.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Oh, I see you are determined to be a naughty girl; go, then, from me to the farthest part of the room, and when you are more quiet, and more like a reasonable being, I will speak to you again. Lead her away, Emily, if she does not push you from her.

These words seemed to make some impression on Helen, but passion again got the better of her feelings, and she suffered herself to be led from her mother, who, much hurt, desired Emily to change her dress, and then, as the carriage was ready, she should take a ride with her, as the evening was delightful. Emily cheerfully obeyed, and by the time she returned, Helen was once more quiet. Mrs. Wyndham then called her to her, and said, "Now, Helen, tell me why you cried?"

HELEN.

Because, Mamma, I was so much disappointed.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

But did you suppose that your tears would overcome Mrs. Selwyn's

just reason for not receiving us, or oblige me to have a concert to entertain you?

HELEN.

No, Mamma, but I could not help crying.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Helen, if we suffer ourselves to say we cannot help being foolish and unreasonable, we shall soon become really incapable of avoiding it, and thus throw away the best of our possessions, reason and self-command. Do you suppose Emily was not disappointed?

HELEN.

But not so much as I was.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

How can you be sure of that? But even allowing it to be so, you

may suppose she was somewhat mortified; at least, then, you would have expected her to appear dissatisfied.

HELEN.

But Emily is older than I am.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

That is true; but if Emily, from your age, had permitted herself to fall into a passion on every disappointment, don't you suppose by this time she would have been still more violent than you are? From an infant I have accustomed Emily to bear disappointment patiently; and this is one instance out of many in which she has found the advantage of it. She has neither fretted herself sick, nor made me uncomfortable.

HELEN.

Have I made you uncomfortable, Mamma ?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Yes : a child can never do wrong without inflicting a pang on the heart of a parent. Besides, in this instance, I have another reason for being disturbed ; the fear that I have been the first cause of your impatience. Knowing that your enjoyments were few, and your inconveniences many, I have always endeavoured to increase the first, and remove the latter. I have always studiously tried to prevent your being disappointed of any expected pleasure, and have even taken pains to procure them for you, knowing, after all my endeavours, how limited they still must be !

HELEN.

Oh, Mamma, how good you are!

MRS. WYNDHAM.

But, Helen, if in return for my indulgence I find that I have injured your temper, and made you incapable of bearing the unavoidable mortifications of life, so far from thinking myself *good*, I shall for ever reproach myself with folly and imprudence! Hitherto I have hoped I had done my duty with respect to my children. Oh, Helen! will *you* oblige me to endure the bitter reproaches of my own heart for having mistaken it?

HELEN, (*with eagerness and tears.*)

Oh never; never! Forgive me, Mamma, I will never again make you uneasy.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

You also treated Maria unkindly.

HELEN.

Maria, I beg you to pardon me.
Will you let me kiss you.

MARIA (*running to her.*)

Yes, my dear ; I was only sorry,
not angry with you. Mamma for-
gives you, so do not be unhappy.

HELEN.

Do you, Mamma, do you forgive
me?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Yes, Helen.

HELEN.

Call me, then, your child, and
embrace me. You do not think me
worthy of it? Punish me, Mamma,
in any way you think proper, but
do not refuse to let me be your child

MRS. WYNDHAM, (*shedding tears.*)

Embrace me, my dear child.

HELEN.

Oh, now then, I am once more happy!

EMILY,

You will permit Helen to go with us, Mamma.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

No, my dear, though I have forgiven her, I cannot in justice remit her punishment; she must remain at home.

EMILY.

Then, Mamma, suffer me to remain with her; I cannot enjoy any pleasure while she is unhappy.

HELEN.

Yes, go, my dear Emily; I deserve to be punished.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

That I may not deprive Emily of the pleasure she has so well deserved, and as Ellen is truly sensible of her fault, I will forget what is past, and we will all go.

The children were excessively delighted, and setting out in the highest spirits, they enjoyed their ride without any mixture of regret.

In the course of a day or two, Mrs. Wyndham went with her eldest daughter to pay a visit in the neighbourhood; there were three or four young people, and it was proposed they should stroll awhile in the garden; they did so, and on their return, Mrs. Wyndham, accustomed to observe the looks of Emily, saw that she returned dissatisfied with her

companions, and much disturbed at something which had happened. When they were seated in the carriage to return, Mrs. Wyndham questioned her on the subject, and Emily replied thus :

It is true, Mamma, I was displeased with the behaviour of the young ladies with whom I walked.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

How, my dear ?

EMILY.

When we first went into the garden, Miss Darnford said to me, " You'll excuse me, Miss Wyndham, if I walk with Miss Smithson, I have not seen her before to-day, and I have a great deal to tell her."—I thought this a little strange ; however, I begged she

would do as she liked best; and accordingly she took Miss Smithson by the arm, walked on with her, and entered into a long talk, laughing and speaking with so much agitation, that I concluded she must have met with something remarkably droll and pleasing. Miss Martin, who walked with me, said, “ I think Miss Darnford is very rude, when one of her *friends*, as she calls them, is with her.” — “ She appears,” I said, “ to have something of consequence to relate to Miss Smithson.” — “ Nonsense,” replied Miss Martin; “ she saw her last night, and she only behaves in this way to give herself an air to you of being very clever, and very fond of her friend. As to what she has to tell her, *I’ll lay*

“ *you a wager* I know it beforehand;
“ she told me, before you came, a
“ great deal about it, and her father
“ would be very angry with her if
“ he knew she told.”

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I think, Emily, as you represent her, Miss Martin has a very blunt, odd, manner.

EMILY.

Oh, yes, Mamma, she used very odd expressions, and I thought spoke strangely. She told me, then, that Miss Darnford was repeating a conversation which had passed before her between her father and a gentleman on some business, about which they had quarrelled. I was quite shocked to think she could ever mention what had passed in her fa-

ther's house ! By this time the story was ended, and the ladies joined us, Miss Darnford saying, " Be sure you " don't mention it. Papa would be " very angry if he should hear of " it." They then walked with us, and Miss Darnford began to ask me questions, how I employed myself, whether I learned music and dancing, and whenever I answered, I saw she looked at Miss Smithson, and they both seemed ready to laugh, which confused me very much. At last Miss Darnford said, " So, you've " no governess, and your Mamma " teaches you herself; well, that is " very odd!"—I asked her, " Why?" and she said, " Oh, I don't know, " only I hear she goes on quite dif- " ferent from the common way, and

“ that you and your sisters are to be
“ *vastly clever !* ”——Here both the
ladies laughed, and Miss Smithson
said, “ Well, thank my stars, my
“ Mamma, has no such whims ; she
“ does not trouble her head much
“ about us. Why, they say, Miss
“ Wyndham, that you never go out
“ without your Mamma ; that you
“ are employed all day with her, and
“ that she makes you tell her every
“ thing you know.” I found by
this time, Mamma, that these young
people were not well educated, not
very amiable, so I said very coolly,
“ You are misinformed, my mother
“ is incapable of *whims*, she is all
“ goodness ; I am never happy but
“ when I am with her ; and as to
“ telling all I know, I never knew

“any thing with which she is not acquainted.”—“What,” said Miss Darnford, “do you tell her the secrets your friends trust you with?” I told her, “I was too young to be entrusted with secrets of any importance, and that I had no particular friends out of my own family.”—“How, no friends!” said Miss Darnford, adding, in an affected tone, “poor thing! How unhappy you must be! Oh, I pity you, since you never knew the delight of *perfect confidence*.”—“Pardon me,” I said, “I talk with perfect confidence to my mother!”—“Oh,” said she, “that is impossible.” And here, Mamma, the conversation was stopped by our being called into the house. But will

you explain to me why these young ladies behaved so strangely?

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I can do that easily, but it will take up some time, since almost every word they spoke contained some false principle. I knew something of the character of Miss Darnford, and had you been a year younger, or your principles less fixed, I should not have permitted you to walk with them. In the first part of her behaviour to her *friend*, (a name abused by such an application) Miss Darnford shewed great want of good-breeding, for politeness forbids us, if ever so much attached, to single out the object of our *affections*, as the sole object of our *attention* in any party; even if

we are with two people whom we love in different degrees, we are not permitted to mortify that person we love least, by excessive marks of attachment to the person we love most; a real friendship needs not these constant testimonies of love, it trusts in its friend, and believes her incapable of misconstruing our attention to others. We ought, then, never to let any person have reason to believe they are in our way, or that we wish their absence, because both humanity and politeness forbid us to mortify any person so severely, who certainly has not deserved it of us.

EMILY.

I understand you, Mamma, and am quite of your opinion.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

In the next place, you may observe in Miss Darnford, an instance of that hateful *exaggeration*, against which I have so often warned you. At thirteen (Miss Darnford's age) it is not possible that the character should be sufficiently formed, the understanding enough enlightened, to admit of our choosing a real *friend*. At that age, in general, the imagination has most power. A fine face, an interesting figure, are recommendations sufficiently powerful to win the heart. Some young people are brought up, particularly at schools, with the idea that they must form an intimacy with some one; thus they select the first person who pleases their fancy, her only

recommendation, perhaps, what they call being very *good natured* ; they tell her all they know ; they detach themselves from their family ; its secrets, if they can learn them, are divulged ; a thousand ill consequences follow, of which you will one day, my dear Emily, be more sensible than I can make you now. When you shall be of age to judge, do not suppose I shall object to your forming a strict intimacy with any one, whom you shall then believe worthy of your esteem ; at present, I hope your mother is your friend.

EMILY.

Oh, the best, the dearest of my friends ; she must always be so.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

You must have seen in Miss Darn-

ford enough to disgust you with that ridiculous affectation of friendship which at her age cannot exist. Young people are too apt to deceive themselves on this point; they find the deceit at last, and the next person they see at all agreeable, supplies the place of the discarded friend; they have chosen lightly, again are deceived, and again change their connexion. Thus they contract a habit of fickleness and caprice; they learn to exaggerate their feelings, the most dangerous of all errors. They never consult their reason, never ask themselves whether they really love her whom they call their *friend*, whether they are capable of painful sacrifices for her sake, whether they really esteem her character.

These are the only proofs of *real* friendship, and judge, then, whether false intimacy and confidence are worthy of the name.

EMILY.

Oh surely not! Besides, what becomes of the discarded friend? She must think herself very ill treated.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Certainly; she did not, perhaps, seek the connexion, it was forced upon her; if she is ungenerous, finding herself thus dismissed, she believes herself at liberty to repeat all that has been said to her. At least she makes the young person ridiculous, and if, like Miss Darnford, she has dared to disclose the affairs of her family, think what dreadful consequences may ensue. How many

quarrels, how much hatred, how many horrid events have flowed from these ill-judged connexions! If, fearing these, a young person acts more *prudently*, and does not discard the *friend* she no longer loves, think what misery she has proposed for herself, to live in habits of intimacy which she dares not break, with a person she has no regard for, whom, perhaps, her better judgement even obliges her to despise! If the same lightness and inconstancy be carried to a more advanced age (as it frequently is) when people have affairs of their own, think what mischief it must do!

EMILY.

I am convinced of the necessity of choosing a friend with attention

and caution, and I thank you, Mamma, a thousand times, for saving me from this false sensibility.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

I think you need no caution to warn you against ever repeating any thing you hear in your father's house.

A child, whose lips are not sealed respecting all that reaches her of family affairs and opinions, is the most dangerous enemy of her connexions: she is unsuspected, no one believes her capable of so great an imprudence or so black a treachery; and thus to do much evil is put into her power. As to what the young ladies said of me and my plan of education, you have sense enough to pity it, as arising only from that thoughtless folly, which very often induces weak

minds to form a hasty decision on what they cannot comprehend.

EMILY.

Atleast, Mamma, I shall draw one advantage from this visit. I shall learn that it is my best and safest way always to tell you all that appears strange to me, and so to preserve myself from the bad effects of ill example.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

Such an observation does you credit, my dear; to draw the best instruction we can, from any event, is always wise and good. Do not tell what has passed to Helen and Maria, they are too young to understand it. Tell them only that you walked in the garden, and that you did not much like your visit.

In regular attendance on their several studies, the Wyndhams passed the summer ; however, for the first time, they saw the approach of winter, without regret, as the oculist, whose advice they had taken, gave them hopes that by that time he should be able to perform an operation on Helen's eyes, which would, if any thing could, restore her to sight. We may judge of the extreme anxiety the whole family awaited this important period ; they took care not to inform Helen of their hopes, lest they should be disappointed, and she should be more dejected than before. The autumn they spent very agreeably, enjoying the settled serenity of the weather, and the different scenes of harvest

and fruit gathering, in all of which the children were permitted to assist. At the end of October the whole family went to London, and in a week after that, Helen was to submit to the decisive operation, from which they all hoped so much. Her mother with infinite feeling and tenderness, prepared her for it, and received her promise to sit patiently and quietly. The day arrived, and the anxious family assembled to witness the event, Charlotte Neville and Maria excepted, whose vivacity they feared, would interrupt the surgeon. Mrs. Wyndham, alike unable to see the operation, or to quit the room, retired to one end of it, trembling, pale, her hands and her heart lifted up to God, but concealing her face

on the shoulder of Arthur, whose arms were thrown round his mother, while his tears fell fast on her cheek. Emily struggling with the extreme agitation of her mind, but by a strong effort, composed, knelt with her eyes fixed on Helen, and one of her arms round her waist, while the other hand held both the hands of Helen. It is not possible to describe the conflicting emotions which were visible on her countenance; hope, fear, tenderness, and devotion, were mingled in her eyes, which were now raised to heaven, now fixed on her sister, and at intervals seeking to penetrate the thoughts of the operator. Mr. Wyndham stood on the other side of Helen, exhorting her to have courage, yet feeling on his

heart every touch of the instrument which the skilful and tender oculist applied to the eyes of the patient, quiet Helen; behind whose chair stood two female servants; hardly dared they breathe, lest they should interrupt or discompose the patient or the surgeon. In about ten minutes Helen gave a faint shriek, and exclaimed——“ Ah, my God ! What is this ? *Do I see ?*—At this exclamation Mrs. Wyndham rose suddenly ; but unable to endure her sensations, she fainted. Mr. Wyndham by a sign requested Emily not to quit her sister, and ran to support his wife, whom with Arthur's assistance, they conveyed out of the room. Emily, her complexion changing every instant from white

to crimson, the tears streaming down her cheeks, could no longer suppress her anxiety.—“ Oh, Sir,” she said, “ does she see?”—“ Hush,” replied the surgeon, and Emily was again silent. Helen exclaimed in broken words; but the surgeon, having finished the operation, with the help of the servants, covered her eyes, and forbade them to remove the bandage, as every thing depended on her not being suffered to use her eyes.

EMILY.

To use her eyes! Does she then see?

SURGEON.

Yes, I am sure of it. But, my good young lady, you are too much disturbed.

SERVANT.

Miss Emily, don't cry so, pray don't.

HELEN.

Ah, this is Emily who weeps so ! Do not, my dear Emily ! I shall see in time. I had such an odd thought just now, I seemed to feel something with my eyes.

Just then Mr. Wyndham returned. Emily rising, threw herself into his arms. " Ah, my dear Sir," she whispered, " Helen will see; she " has seen ! but my mother."—" Go " to your mother my dear," said Mr. Wyndham, " she is better, but " unable to return hither, compose " yourself, and prevail on her to be " composed."

Emily then flew to her mother ;

she told her what had passed, and in about ten minutes they were both composed enough to return to Helen, whom they found lying on her own bed, with all the windows closed. The surgeon ordered that she should be kept in darkness some days, and light be admitted only by degrees; he bestowed on Emily the highest praises, for the united sensibility and fortitude she had shown. “This,” said he, “is true sensibility; in the course of my practice I witness so much affectation, so much exaggerated feeling; I see people unable to attend their nearest connexions when it is absolutely necessary; running away from scenes of pain and inconvenience, with so much selfishness, as quite sick-

“ens me sometimes of *sensibility*. But
 “you, my dear Miss Wyndham,
 “have reconciled me to it, since I
 “perceive you make it assistant to,
 “not destructive of your duties.
 “Such scenes as that of to-day sel-
 “dom occur; nothing could be
 “more trying, and it might very
 “well have happened that a delicate
 “frame had sunk under the exertions
 “of a strong mind. What I prin-
 “cipally allude to, is the common
 “practice of people, who run from
 “the sick beds of those whom they
 “ought to sooth and comfort, be-
 “cause, truly, they cannot bear to
 “see them suffer!”

In the course of a few days, light was
 gradually admitted into the apart-
 ment of Helen, and she was suffered

to see those dear friends to whom she owed so much. But no description can do justice to the circumstances of their meeting, nor can any idea be given of the delight with which she gazed on the countenances of her mother and sister. By degrees she became familiar with the objects about her, which at first she knew not how to avoid in walking across the room; nor was it for some time she could enjoy the beauties of nature, scarcely understanding the meaning of her own sensations. By degrees, however, her mind became more composed, and the sight of the sun, the stars, the clouds, a river, or a flower, were to her a source of delight for hours; her genius expanded, and her mind was so struck by

these objects, at once so new and so interesting, that every one observed her thoughts were more sublime, and her language more expressive, than those of other people. Even the singularity of her expressions, the eagerness of her gestures, were interesting.

The restoration of her sight completed the happiness of her amiable family; when her eyes were sufficiently strengthened to admit of it, she learnt rapidly to write and read; and for painting, she discovered a genius so remarkable, as induced her father to give her the best masters. In both portraits and landscapes she succeeded wonderfully. Attached with enthusiasm to her parents and sisters, she never forgot their cares in her helpless state. If they were

sick, she devoted herself to them, saying frequently, "Oh, can I ever repay your attention to me when *"I was blind!"*

Emily remained still the same excellent character. She attended entirely to the education of Charlotte Neville, who became all she could wish her. Arthur and Maria in the same manner fulfilled the wishes of their parents.

Prosperity and peace to the end of their lives attended this amiable family, who were constantly employed in the performance of their several duties, and whose goodness was recompensed by as much felicity as this life is capable of receiving.

THE END.

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